

NRC'S TREE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Public Shade Tree Replacement Program

The NRC, which acts as the Town's Tree Wardens, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, manages a proactive and ambitious public shade tree management program that preserves and protects over 3,000 Town-owned trees for the enjoyment of the public and the enhancement of Wellesley's environment. Routine maintenance is conducted on a four-year cycle to provide adequate safety pruning to all of these trees. The care includes: vandalism repairs as needed; storm damage repairs; shade and park tree planting; management of new trees for one or two years; tree and stump removals as necessary; and other tree care according to need.

Trees are essential to Wellesley's character as a green, shady, residential town. Tree planting maintains Wellesley's property values and quality of life, reduces sound and glare, improves air quality, helps prevent climate change through carbon absorption, replenishes groundwater, reduces erosion, buffers weather changes, adds beauty, inspires tranquility, screens unsightly areas, and separates incompatible uses. This year, 124 new trees were planted by the NRC and DPW, primarily on public land. At Town Meeting this year, \$30,000 was appropriated for new tree plantings throughout Town and for shade tree replacement of trees lost due to age, disease, storms and road reconstruction projects.

Public Shade Tree Removal Hearings and Appeals

Only when a public shade tree is severely diseased, is in substantial decline, or threatens public safety does the NRC and the DPW propose to remove a tree, and then only after a Public Hearing that gives residents an opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions about the proposed tree removal. In FY11, the NRC held four Public Shade Tree Removal Hearings. There was one appeal of an NRC decision to remove a public shade tree and the Board of Selectmen upheld the NRC's decision.

NRC Works With DPW and the State To Develop A Tree Inventory Program

In FY11, the NRC continued to work with the Massachusetts Urban and Community Forestry Division and the Parks Division of the Dept. of Public Works in the development of a State Tree Inventory Program tailored for the Town of Wellesley. The State has developed a database computer system entitled "Tree Keeper" that will assist towns in developing an effective database system to track the health, location, and other information about trees. The State is initially providing the software free to towns in order to help it develop an inventory listing of urban and community trees. The NRC is working with the Town GIS Department and the DPW to capture important features of this system.

Massachusetts Honors Wellesley with 29th-Year Tree City USA Award

In May 2012, Wellesley was awarded the Tree City USA "Annual Award" for excellence in the management and nurturing of public shade trees for the 29th consecutive year. Only 80 of the 351 towns and cities in Massachusetts have ever received this award, and Wellesley has received it longer than any other. The NRC serves as the Town's Park Commission and Tree Warden and, together with the Department of Public Works, the NRC promotes a "Shade Trees Make the Difference" campaign to encourage support for shade trees throughout the Town. To be eligible for the Tree City Award, Wellesley had to spend at least \$2 per capita on urban

forestry, enforce laws that protect public trees and hold an Arbor Day celebration and meet other standards.

This award is a testament to the Town's long tradition of valuing trees and open spaces. Wellesley founded a Park Commission in 1888 to landscape avenues and parks, and it was one of the first boards established in the Town.

Urban and community forests are visible signs that our community has a sense of pride and that it has been highly valued by residents for a long time. The environmental benefits of urban and community forests are many but they can be summarized as follows:

- Our forested streets and parks help define the character of our community and offer the functional human benefits of noise reduction, cooling shade, visual screening, enhanced property values, economic growth, community pride, reduction of crime and more rapid recovery from illnesses;
- Our forests reduce levels of pollutants such as solid particles, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and others that seriously impact human physical, mental and emotional health negatively;
- Trees are the Town's most important natural infrastructure; and
- Our forests reduce heating and cooling needs for residential buildings thereby reducing costs, reduce the "urban heat island effect" (localized heating due to the preponderance of black topped surfaces) to provide a more human friendly living environment, reduce rainfall runoff and erosion thereby improving water quality and quicker re-charge of local aquifers, function as habitat for wildlife to enrich human enjoyment and reduce global warming for the long term security of the Earth.

Winter Moth Caterpillar Control Town Tree Protection Program

In FY11, in response to a significant increase in damage to Town trees by the invasive insect known as the "winter moth caterpillar," the NRC worked with the DPW to implement its fourth year of a proactive program to address this problem and protect the Town's trees. Last year, the DPW proposed, and the NRC approved, a program to spray approx. 800 public trees with an environmentally safe spinosad product called "Conserve" to control damage from the winter moth caterpillar.

Winter Moth State Biological Control Project at Centennial Reservation

Over the past two years, a team of scientists from the State Department of Conservation and Recreation released approximately 1,000 parasitic flies in Centennial Reservation in an effort to test whether they can be used to control the invasion of the winter moth, which is stripping trees of their foliage throughout the State, especially in Eastern Massachusetts. In FY11 the NRC approved the continuation of this project with additional fly releases in Centennial Reservation, which is the largest release of the flies in the State. Other releases were also made in Hingham, Falmouth and Wenham. Professor Joseph Elkinton, a professor of entomology at UMASS Amherst, organized this joint project between UMASS, the Federal government, and the State Department of Conservation and Recreation. The specie of fly released, which is the "cyzenis albicans," is a natural enemy of the winter moth and has been released in other areas to help eradicate the winter moth invasions. The scientists believe that the fly will only attack the winter moth and not other

species, and that it will likely take years for the flies to have a significant impact on the large number of winter moths.